

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MARCH, 1943

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SIXPENCE

## KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

DOCUMENTARY has been a plant plagued, and a prey to disease, from the day the sun first shone on it; money troubles, distribution troubles and a hundred other pests have done their best to blacken the blossom in spring-time and curl the leaves in summer. But Documentary has kept going and its influence has kept spreading. Since the war we have collected several new pests and one of the worst is the Public Relation Officer.

There are over two hundred of them in the various civil ministries, in the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry. Their work as far as films are concerned is to promote ideas, to see that their department gets its fair share of films, to make sure that the department is properly represented in those films, and to provide the film makers with facilities. That is the basis of their work. Of course it can be widened out almost indefinitely, as in the case of the Ministry of Agriculture, whose P.R. department has initiated an enormous number of films, and spent a great deal of time and trouble on helping them to be made. But this is exceptional. Here are two examples, *not* exceptional, of how P.R.O.s work. Everyone making films for the Government has had similar experiences.

For a Ministry of Information script an interview was needed with a seaman from a motor torpedo boat. No filming or anything complicated like that—just a talk, to get information. The M.O.I. gave the producers a contact with a member of the Admiralty Public Relations Department. Over the telephone he answered that he couldn't do anything without a letter. It was pointed out to him that he already had a letter from the M.O.I.; but apparently this wasn't full enough, he needed more details. As soon as the telephone call was finished a letter was despatched by hand. Next day he was rung again; yes, he'd got the letter, but it was not detailed enough: "Which sailor do you want to see?"

"How do you mean which sailor do we want to see?"

"Well, I can't fix you up with any sailor. I must have the name of the man you want to see."

"But look, we are a film company. We don't know any sailors on M.T.B.s."

"I'm sorry, but we must have that information before we can proceed."

The production company replied politely that they would

try, and sent someone to go through the back numbers of a newspaper. By this means they finally got the name of a sailor who had been decorated.

So the Admiralty were rung again and given the sailor's name. It sounds crazy but it's true. The P.R.O. replied that it would be very difficult to trace the man, could he be given three or four days. The producers said "Sure, and thanks very much". Four days later the Admiralty were rung again: "No, we're sorry, we haven't traced him yet. But ring us next week."

Five long weeks went by, with two or three calls a week. Then at the beginning of the sixth week the Admiralty rang and said "Can you send someone down to such and such a place on Saturday?" With a sigh of relief the company said "Yes".

On Thursday a jam occurred. The man who was supposed to go had to rush to Liverpool to see another sailor who was sailing on Saturday. Another call was put through to the Admiralty. The gentleman there was told politely what had happened and asked if it was possible to put off the appointment until Sunday.

At which he became exceedingly belligerent and said, "If you don't go on Saturday you can't go at all."

It was pointed out to him that the company had waited over six weeks for the job; and that the least he might do was to move it by one day. He replied that he was not going to ring up the dockyard again. After a short argument the producers said that they were sorry but they couldn't manage Saturday. The man in the P.R. office replied, "All right then, I'll cancel the whole affair!"

About ten minutes later the M.O.I. rang the producers, saying: "What's going on? X of the Admiralty has been on and said that you have let him down. And he says he'll see to it that your company doesn't get any more facilities from the Admiralty."

Well, that's how someone at the Admiralty is helping. First he was unable to get the name of a sailor. Second, six weeks delay on a simple job. Third, deliberate attempt to stop Government work (then and in the future) through personal pique.

The second story concerns someone at the Ministry of Home

(continued on next page)



Security. The film concerned was a fifteen hundred footer to be offered for distribution to the M.O.I. The last sequence of the film was to be the story of firemen doing industrial work in their spare time. It was a simple enough story. After the blitz had died down the firemen got tired of sitting around. With the demand for increased production in the factories they thought it would be a good idea for each station to organise itself to do whatever work it could—such as making ammunition boxes and food boxes for the Middle East forces. There was a certain amount of opposition from the Ministry of Home Security; but in the end the scheme became quite successful, and the Ministry took it over officially. The story seemed to be simple, innocuous and quite good propaganda.

The film idea was put up to the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Home Security. The reply was that they would like a few alterations. The script was re-written and submitted and again they asked for alterations and suggested a different approach. Again the script was re-written and again it was submitted; this time it was announced that the Ministry did not approve of the sequence in any form whatsoever and would not provide the facilities without which it could not be shot. And that was that. *It had only taken seven weeks.*

It is a strange position. The P.R.O.s, if they were good—as they used to be—could move the mountains that would make film production possible. But instead, for three years, it has been a continual battle. One almost feels that any film that reaches the screen has been made despite these men and their organisations. And in the last six months there has been an even greater growth of this bureaucracy. The first stages of the war are over. Russia is more and more on the offensive; the Eighth Army has been victorious in North Africa; and, as always in such circumstances, the office wallahs and executives are gaining ascendancy over the people who actually have done the work. It is visible everywhere, in the services, in industry, in all sorts of odd places, and in films. Week by week the number of films cancelled or postponed grows in number. Five months' work on one film and it is indefinitely held up because of lack of co-operation from the Admiralty. Three months' work on another, and it is cancelled because agreement cannot be reached with the Ministry of Health. On most films there are weeks of delay involving long and pointless arguments—re-writing of scripts—endless conferences—committee meetings.

A lot of the blame must go to the Ministry of Information. They seldom make vigorous enough attempts to get over the difficulties. They are far too inclined to take the P.R.O.'s answers as final. A real Ministry of Information should, of course, have absolute control over all propaganda, with only a security control by other departments; but it is doubtful if we shall ever get as far as this—particularly since the M.O.I. does not seem too keen to take the responsibility even for its own small field.

Bureaucracy, and its attendant evils, has reduced the effect of film propaganda by half or maybe more; and there the matter stands. We have managed to muddle along for three and a half years, mainly because the film makers have had sufficient faith in films to go on making them despite all the obstructions. To-day obstruction has reached a new high level. It almost looks like a deliberate campaign to stop films being effective. Enquiries among producers seem to indicate that for every film finished there is another cancelled; and it is mostly the good films that are cancelled—or canned.

But as documentary has managed to survive other pests it will most likely survive this one. People like Watt and Cavalcanti are pushing out strong branches outside of bureaucratic control. Grierson has a paid circulation of 4,000 cinemas in North America and an organisation of 350 people in Canada making new and lively films.

For the people left inside the old units like Strand, Shell,

Rotha, Realist, and Crown, the main task seems to be to get on with the battle against bureaucracy. Contest every issue. If one script is cancelled get another written. Make as many films as possible that do not need Government facilities. Make as many films as possible outside of Government control. Bureaucracy hates us and our films. It hates the Watts, and the Cavalcantis, and their films. It hates especially the Griersons and their practical successes. But it has only laziness, inefficiency, lack of imagination and lack of courage to hate with; and as they say nowadays: "There's no future in it."

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Dull Films and Good Women

IT SEEMS to us sometimes that Hollywood, the boisterous old hag, is getting a little tired. The wrinkles take a little longer to smooth out in the mornings and the arches are beginning to fall. It takes more effort now to do the old act and even when it's done it hasn't got the same sparkle. She still has her moments of course, perhaps when those two nice young men William Wyler and Orson Welles take her for a ride or when Ida Lupino and Bette Davies drop in for a *demi-tasse*, but things aren't what they were. It's the bright lights and gay music she misses. They give her ginger ale when she asks for champagne and a boiling fowl when she wants grouse. She's got the old ideas about what she wants, but the boys just can't give it any more. Her brightest comedies are beginning to remind her, and everyone else, of Auntie Elstree's musicals, circa 1936. She's having trouble with some of her girls too. Those promising sex queens are all turning into nice healthy American girls and she has to use those wicked continental women for her bedroom scenes. . . . What with the girls getting good and the films getting dull, it's hard to keep the party going, and it's kind of morbid having to rely on Greer Garson all the time. After all Bob Hope and Fred Astaire can't keep the fun going for ever. So maybe she had better look around for some new and slightly gayer people or she will have to stop Miss Rogers doing a Duse all over the place and get her back into the party. She knows that people want to laugh, but it's difficult to know what they want to laugh at. Sometimes, after one of those M.G.M. script conferences, she might even think they are laughing at her.

### D.A.K.

WE CONTINUE to hear from all sources (some of them most unexpected) an endless series of highly entertaining anecdotes about life in the Department of Army Kinematography. The jokes are always good but we cannot help sometimes feeling that the production and distribution of instructional films for the army should not be an entirely farcical matter. However, the recent widely circulated account of what qualifications are most likely to yield a commission in D.A.K. and the story about the showing of a highly secret film which was by accident thrown open to a goggle-eyed crowd of unauthorised persons, both are up to the best Wardour Street standards. Let us laugh while we may. It is a hard unfanciful world and the time cannot be far distant when sanity will prevail and a reconstituted D.A.K. will have nothing to do but really at long last to get down to its job.

### Soviet Films

WE HAVE been very pleased to receive an excellently produced catalogue of the Soviet films available in Britain. It comes from the Soviet Film Agency at the Soviet Embassy and not only lists and briefly describes the films but also provides complete information on how they may be obtained. The sources range from the M.O.I. to the R.S.P.C.A. and include several commercial distributors. The films are listed in seven categories. There are feature films, short war films, music and art films, garden films, news-reels from the front, general news films and a miscellaneous list which contains such varied titles as *The Five Men of Velish*, *Glimpses of Soviet Science* and *Bread Bakery and Confectionery*. Many of the films may be

(continued on page 194)



# The Cracked Voice of Propaganda

**D**URING the last two years the M.O.I. has built up what is perhaps the largest and best organised non-theatrical distribution scheme in the world. The total audience during 1942 was twelve million, and it is expected to reach eighteen million during 1943. Over half of the 1942 audience, 6½ million people, went to shows given by mobile projection units—137 units give 1,300 shows a week. So far so good. But over the past two or three months reports have been coming in to show that although the M.O.I. scheme gives an enormous number of shows to large numbers of people, the shows themselves are not all that they might be. The following is a description of a fairly typical show to a rural audience:—

"Lights please!" shouted a voice over the babble and laughter of children's voices.

"Listen, children," said the man operating the movie projector, "for the second time I must remind you that this is a free show given by the Ministry of Information. If you can't keep quiet, you will have to leave. All right, everybody. Lights out!"

In the comparative silence which followed this announcement, the Voice of Propaganda crackled... and buzzed... and crackled... and blurred. With considerable concentration we could catch a few words in every sentence. The hall was ice cold, the chairs were hard. The projector squeaked and rattled. Finally we resigned ourselves to piecing together some kind of story out of the visuals. After all, you could hardly blame the children.

And so for two hours a rural audience in a village hall somewhere in Britain got its bi-monthly dose of propaganda: *Worker and War-front* (Rotha Productions); *Battle of Supplies* (Strand); *The Battle for Oil* (National Film Board of Canada); *The Harvest Shall Come* (Realist for I.C.I.). The first three of these films were straight commentary, but were still extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to follow. The last was a story film told in dialect and was completely unintelligible.

The 1,300 shows are shared by factory audiences and villages. Although of course there are no children at the factory shows, the sound is often just as bad. There seem to be two main problems:

- (1) The shows are not presented as well as they could be.
- (2) The quality of the sound is so bad that it is often completely unintelligible.

## Showmanship

Number (1) is not a difficult problem to solve. Children go to the shows with their parents and, as children have always done at the "pictures", they enjoy them in their own way with a lot of shouts and screams. Of course if the sound were better the children would most likely follow the films more closely; but anyway it seems fairly easy to split the shows and have special shows for children.

Then there is the question of how the films are shown. The projectionists are extremely competent and most of them add their own little personal touches to the presentation of each show; but they are not given much help. In most cases they have to start their shows off with no preliminary build-up. Lights are turned off abruptly and on goes the first film. Quite a number of projectionists, on their own initiative, make a short speech at the beginning of each programme. This helps to quieten the audience down and get them settled and ready to see films. This also seems a fairly simple problem to solve. The Ministry could easily put out a good standard introduction and end for each new programme, with even a musical run-up of a couple of hundred feet, some good exciting newsreel shots and a distinctive title.

Lastly there is the local advertising. At the moment small posters about 15 inches by 25 are used. There is a white space shaped like a screen in which the projectionist writes the details of the show. There are no special notices for the front of the hall. If the non-theatrical shows are to be successful there must be a certain amount of showmanship to put them over and to convince people that they are not going to see a charity performance but as sensible and entertaining a film show as they might get in their local cinema.

The projectionists and organisers are good, competent and enthusiastic, but few of them have any experience of the presentation side of the entertainment business. What might solve the trouble would be for the Ministry to employ a good showman from an exhibiting company to go round and draw up a list of ideas for advertising and presenting the shows.

## Sound

The quality of the sound at the shows is a far more complicated problem. To start with there are conditions caused by the war which cannot be corrected. There is a shortage of trained projectionists. It is difficult to get replacements of projector parts. No new projectors of the best type have been received for over two years. Laboratory work is not all that it should be, due to inexperienced personnel, faulty film stock, and shortage of chemicals. But if we are going to have non-theatrical shows of sound films they must be heard. If not, there is no point in having sound and we might just as well go back to silent films with titles.

Both the Ministry of Information and the producers could have done a lot towards getting better sound. The Ministry seems to have been so pleased with the figures that they haven't bothered to do anything about the sound. The producers see a 35 mm. show copy run with ideal projection conditions in a comfortable theatre and have not bothered to enquire any further. The Ministry invited them to meet the regional organisers of the non-theatrical scheme but only two producers turned up and no results were achieved.

## Tricks to Improve

It would be fairly easy to get a first-class sound engineer and to send him out to do a thorough investigation of the original recording, the development of the original negative, the condition and quality of recording prints, the quality of re-recording, the loss through reduction printing, and finally of the projection, and to issue as soon as possible a full list of recommendations to production companies, sound recordists, laboratories and projectionists. There are so many simple little tricks that can improve 16 mm. projection that are not known by the technicians involved. No re-recording of any film that is to be optically reduced, no background music or effects, as little dialogue as possible, no commentators with deep bass voices, simple damping of tinny halls. Some sound systems seem much better for optical reduction than others; for instance, Movietone system is usually very good.

## Labour Wasted

About nine million people are going to sit in village halls and factories during 1943 and see these non-theatrical shows. It is absolutely essential for something to be done quickly. The Ministry of Information has been approached with the suggestion that a sound engineer should be appointed to conduct an investigation but that was over a month ago and nothing has happened yet. Good audiences, good films, and a lot of valuable labour and materials are being wasted. It is about time that the M.O.I. realised it is more important for people to see films and to hear them than it is to have a good report at the end of the year with a lot of fancy figures.



# THEY LAUGH AT REALISM

By Roger Manvell

It is just part of the debt truth must sometimes pay to art. It is only reasonable. If you spend thousands of hours of a man's leisure time training him to expect human action to be dressed up and made all of a climax so that he shall live in a progressive state of pleasing tension, that is what will happen. They will laugh at the real thing. They will grow tense and hushed only at the artificial. That is, at the pictures.

This is a danger for the documentary directors who are now gradually, and deservedly, cutting into feature direction. Their work is a ray of cool light on a screen which has been too long flushed pink during the credits of the customary pieces of romantic artifice. But the cool light is proving a little too much for many of the cinema-goers who have not seen enough of this new idiom to distinguish it from the ingrained conventions of melodrama.

The conventions of melodrama have predisposed our twenty-five million cinema addicts to anticipate well-groomed artificial faces, dramatically timed gesture and action, the finesse of the well-paid artist. After the slick and polished winner, the real people who play unpaid parts in the newsreels look garish and awkward, like persons who bat and shy before a press photographer at some local function, or stare hollowly out of the pages of the illustrated society weeklies. Even the toughs like Spencer Tracy, Will Fyfe and Wallace Beery are well-paid and therefore polished toughs, full of disciplined and timely vigour.

## A new idiom

The documentary directors started out the other end of the scale. The only artists were behind the camera: the only timely gesture from the real unpaid raw material of humanity in front of the lens was the gesture of their particular craft or skill. The pits and hollows of their unsmooth faces, accentuated by lighting and camera angle, were a new pictorial idiom, a new translation of what was too familiar in daily experience to seem right on a screen so long devoted to the strange glamour of the stars. And so these faces from the street and factory, enlarged in close-up, smiling, self-conscious, real, were a shock to the people themselves, and caused the same laughter as the curate gets when he appears in a farce at some parish theatricals.

People who see themselves in a documentary nearly always laugh their heads off. The film has to be shown again and again before the sight of themselves enlarged on a screen, performing some familiar action, becomes an object of critical interest. This laughter is partly inborn shyness mixed with vanity. They never knew they looked like that. Doesn't Mrs. Brown act funny. Look at him going on so. There's old George. It is rather terrifying to see yourself where you are used to seeing Ginger Rogers. At the same time simple personal vanity is tickled and the laughter is combined with happy shyness. The cinema records an act of permanence: it is amusing to feel that you will do it again every time the film is projected: it is a peepshow immortality. But above all the laughter is due to the sense of artificiality which

the screen brings to the familiar; the body in which you live and move sits watching the same body busy and moving independently. And it is darn funny.

Violence on the screen quite often provokes laughter. Pleasure-excitement in real life is usually a laughing-matter; that is just human. While the ghosts quiver on the dark lit screen many people who are enjoying themselves laugh with excitement. So do children during a chase. Laughter is part of the relief from the suppressed energy called tension. But what is more interesting and more curious is the laughter produced by shock.

## Taboo words

The language used by the men on the raft whilst the Jerries of *In Which We Serve* shoot them up is mild compared with what a voluble man would use in the actual circumstances. Yet an unsophisticated audience knowing full well the peril and stress of the situation will laugh at words like "bastard" and "bloody". Why? Because they come from an artificial medium, a screen, a speaker, and they are magnified, are heard in a packed hall. Such words heard by anyone with two ears alert, in any place where people congregate, are none the less secret words, taboo words for half-private use only. They are like taking your uglier underclothes off in front of a comparatively well-dressed assembly. Result, laughter due to mild shock. Severer shock, such as the actual experience itself, would lead either to hysteria or greater self-control according to temperament.

Psychologists, social workers, artists unfettered by minor conventions, and documentary directors do not laugh at swearing. But the public does; swearing is a continuous mild joke, like sex is a strong one. It is irritating to hear the laughter, but it is ten to one that the average provincial British audience will produce it.

An excellent recent documentary of Army experience is *Kill or be Killed*. The evident intention of this film is to be realistic within the frame-work of an uncensorable treatment. The language is strong, but less strong than the situation would actually warrant; the subject is as grim as anything in war can be: two soldiers, one British, one German, man-hunt each other. Barring details produced by captious criticism, there is nothing in the film which could not happen. And yet when the British sergeant, having but barely escaped with his life from the marksmanship of the German sniper, says "I'll get that Jerry bastard before he gets me" (a perfectly reasonable remark) the audience shouts with laughter, or gives a mild titter if it is drawn from the more county set-up. Thirty seconds is then required to restore the atmosphere intended by the situation as a whole.

In the fine Soviet documentary-newsreel *One Day of War* there is a most moving shot towards the end of an old Russian woman beating a German prisoner after the reoccupation of her village by the Russians. The significance of this unposed shot entirely escaped the audience, which laughed at the crude, unco-ordinated movements of the woman's pent-up indignation.

Reconstructed, acted, carefully shot, edited, that is dressed up in screen terms, this simple incident of personal retribution could have reduced this same audience to any emotional state required by the conscious intentions of the director.

The bayoneting at the end of *Nine Men*, violently and primitively reconstructed with the steel thrust down beside instead of into the bodies of the Italian soldiers will probably cause this same laughter in the provincial and suburban houses. It is a pity. More dramatically, more horrifically or more artificially shot there would be no laughs. But Harry Watt is a documentary director, brought up to use actuality in the documentary tradition of truth first and drama second. But the simple violence of the bayoneting is the climax of a very good film, with documentary turned feature. It is to be hoped audiences will take it in the strong stride of the film, forgetting their normal reaction to violence presented without the trickeries of atmospheric melodrama.

It is of great importance at this stage of the development of commercial cinema that the more intelligent producers and directors watch these quirks of audience psychology. It is important that *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Citizen Kane* should not have their serious theme and beauty of treatment marred by the titters of ill-informed audiences. The war has brought a period of maturity to the commercial screen. The financial bosses have let up and allowed thought and actuality to fill the bill on occasion, especially in this country. Exhibitors go on clamouring for the escape-from-the-war pictures, full of the glamour-beauty which has paid so well in the past, and will always pay whilst there is nothing else to see. Audiences, shocked into seriousness by the Nazi threat to their strength and civil liberties, by their broken homes and severed affections, are no longer sure that glamour-beauty supplies their need. They require to share the emotions of the war itself, and to a generation not fully literate in good writing, the screen alone can provide serious participation in the dominant emotion of this changing world. This explains the success of those films which have combined a good story with actualistic treatment—*The Foreman went to France*, *49th Parallel*, *One of our Aircraft is Missing*, *Next of Kin* and *Nine Men*.

## Power of realism

This new school of realism requires the assistance of the documentary directors who know the people who are fighting the war. It requires their sympathetic understanding in the direction of that people when they are needed in front of the camera. But these directors must watch what is for them a new audience-psychology, the psychology of the direction of the feature film. Truth must be presented, but in such a way that its inescapable emotional appeal is felt through the peculiar channels of screen idiom along which the public has learnt to receive its emotional impulses. They must not laugh at realism; they must feel its power and understand its implications.



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## TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH

### 'The Magnificent Ambersons': 'Desert Victory'

#### *The Magnificent Ambersons*

A Mercury Production. *Script and Direction:* Orson Welles.

(from a novel by Booth Tarkington).

ORSON WELLES is frightened of nothing—except his subject matter. He undertakes every possible risk in shooting and in direction; proves himself right by breaking all the rules; shows an almost childish disrespect for his audiences' eyes, and at the same time compliments them by assuming that they have adult and quick-moving minds; but in this film, as in *Citizen Kane*, the skeleton still rattles in the cupboard, and the unspeakable fear is spoken—"Let not my characters be true."

Welles should worry. He's got a long way to go before he learns to bring people alive. His people, and what happens to them, are part of a very stimulating exercise in which he persuades us to take part. They go through their motions, and their emotions, in fine style. They excite our interest, our admiration and a part of our critical faculties. But they cannot move us, because Welles has put them there as a barrier between himself and reality—and also perhaps, as a barrier between himself and the general citizenry.

*The Magnificent Ambersons* is about a fantastically wealthy and wildly perverted family in a small American town at the beginning of the century—the story of an aristocracy whose corruption comes from money and not from inbreeding. The family destroys itself, as it is fated to do, and all its material possessions (collected, displayed, polished, arranged, presented, and carefully catalogued by Welles in scene after scene) crumble away and vanish. There is nothing left except a horrid young man who has killed his mother out of jealousy and a horrid young lady who is much, much too fond of her father.

#### The Old Myth.

The Ambersons' story is really the old myth which runs through Greek tragedy and has been pushed around not unsuccessfully by O'Neill in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. It is a story which must either be told in the grand manner of great tragedy, with all the Aristotelian canons duly observed; or as a psychological study of great and unpleasant intimacy. Welles gets nearer to the latter than the former—but in general all he gives us is a puppet show, put on regardless of expense, with the figures stuffed with the very finest sawdust.

The extraordinary thing is that it is so well done that the film commands your closest attention all the time. In order presumably to avoid any formalisation which might verge on the tragic, he plays each scene with a casualness of dialogue which could only result from a miraculous technique, endless and painstaking rehearsal, and a wonderful sense of timing. Over and over again he plays scenes in the most unexpected

way with insolent ease. The kitchen scene—about 800 feet of single set-up and dialogue, with movements across the picture and into the background by three different people, with a lavish loading of inanimate detail which recalls Feyder's *Thérèse Raquin*—is persuasive and engrossing. The old man thinking about death with a flicker of firelight on his face. The "horseless-carriage" party in the early twentieth century snow—an animation of everybody's old snapshot albums. Aunt Fanny's scene of super hysterics, played with an almost embarrassing accuracy. The long and elaborate truck shots along streets and sidewalks. The unexpected camera angles and camera movements. All these things are remarkable, and are completely unlike any work being done by any other film director to-day.

There is little doubt as to the great influence Orson Welles will have on the technique of movie. He is elaborating new and revolutionary methods in continuity, in camera fluidity, and in the use of dialogue. But his own stature will never increase until he has the courage to face up to real people, and to put them, in the round, on the screen. Till then his appeal will be limited to film society and specialised audiences—not because he is "above the heads" of ordinary folk, but because ordinary folk have enough good sense not to bother themselves about matters which are purely cerebral and have in them nothing creative, nothing of the real warmth of humanity.

#### *Desert Victory*

Army and R.A.F. Film Units. M.O.I.

This is a splendid job. It doesn't try to do more than it sets out to do. It eschews tricks and frills. It rests solidly on the material shot—and very finely shot indeed—by all the many anonymous technicians attached to the forces in Libya. The only additions which have been made are a number of simple animated diagrams, which explain the tactical aspects very clearly; and a staged sequence depicting the Eighth Army's night attack at El Alamein. The cutting is first class, throughout.

The mood of the film is one of sober enthusiasm which fits the moment and which is very well backed by J. L. Hodson's commentary. There is no gloating (not even over the newsreel shots of Rommel at his most pompous), and no over-playing of events whose greatness lies in their achievement, which has been duly and accurately recorded for us by the movie camera and which can only be sullied by exaggeration and over-emphasis. In fact all the newsreel boys ought to be made to see *Desert Victory* through over and over again. They might learn quite a lot that way.

The film is, of course, a sure-fire winner in this country. No doubt it will be even more effective in Russia, the U.S.A., and the other Allied countries. And it has, one hopes, finally proved to the authorities that it is sensible to give front line priorities to the film people.



# The First Documentalist

by Sgt. James Dugan

OF THE U.S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE NEWSREEL UNIT

AMONG the things I forgot to pack when I came overseas were my notes on Francis Doublier, so the following sketch will be irritatingly vague and possibly inaccurate as to exact dates and circumstances. However, the redoubtable pioneer who is my subject will undoubtedly survive the war. I shouldn't be surprised if he one day goes back to his native Lyons, where the programme of his homecoming banquet will furnish more accurate data than this.

His old employers, the Lumière brothers, will not be there. One is dead and the other is conspicuous on the rolls of quislings compiled by Fighting France.

In the eighties and nineties Lumière Frères of Lyons were the best known manufacturers of photographic supplies. They had a large factory, a sound name, and a consuming itch to sell their supplies in other countries. In 1892 their excellent laboratories began work on an advertising device of such ingenuity that Auguste and Louis Lumière foresaw the film market of the world falling into their lap. This was the first practicable motion picture camera.

Frieze-Green in England, the Edison inventors in America, and many others, were working along parallel lines on gadgets with which to turn the enigma of persistence of vision into the first fumbling cinema. Whatever motives the others entertained the Lumières perfected their remarkable camera for the sole purpose of boosting sales of film and photographic supplies.

Francis Doublier, a bright, black-eyed country boy of 16, was an apprentice in the Lyons factory, when he was designated as one of the agents assigned to take to the field with the new device in 1894. The camera itself was small and versatile. It weighed about 8 lbs. and was about the size of a G.P.O. telephone coin box. It loaded 50 feet of 35 mm. film at a shutter speed of 24 frames a second. It was, and is, a well-made machine. I have seen excellent pictures Francis Doublier made with it in 1941.

In addition to being a camera, it was also a projector when augmented by carbon arc lamps. Doublier's travelling kit was portable. He depended on a mail schedule of raw stock and chemicals at various points in his travels, and, of course, processed his own film, wherever he happened to be. The skilful Doublier developed and printed his stuff in baths, bidets, basins, or whatever the hotel accommodation offered.

The camera itself was not for sale; in fact the Lumières took the piquant attitude that the device was a deep trade secret, which they would have been horrified to consider manufacturing for sale. Doublier and his fellow agents were sworn to guard it like a glamorous bombsight. They slept with it.

Doublier's method of selling the photographic supplies of the Lyons factory was to go to a key town and set himself up in the market place at high noon with as much commotion as possible. He would then expose fifty or a hundred feet of film on the crowded street, taking care to catch as many people as possible and to apprise each and every one of them that they had been filmed. Posters would then surreptitiously appear, advertising a showing that night in any available hall or storeroom. As he grew practised at the

game, the programme was no doubt padded out with topical subjects such as the market place of the previous city on his travel.

The cameraman-promoter had gorgeous fun on his trips and his selling of the name of Lumière was notable enough to keep him travelling for the better part of three years. The films he made, not only of the market place, but the parade, the local shrine and monument, the scenic beauty of a city, dribbled back to Lyons. He sent them as much to get rid of them as with any view of reporting on his travels, much less as a conscious documentalist.

He travelled through France and Germany (a steamer on the Rhine), Spain (a bullfight), Italy (a holy day), and as far East as Samara, now known as Kuibishev, in Russia. He filmed the coronation of Tsar Alexander II in St. Petersburg in 1896, and secured shots of the disaster a few days afterward on the plain outside Petrograd, at, I think, Tsarskoye Seloye, where thousands of people were killed in a mad rush to see the new Tsar and Tsarina, and to get one of the coronation souvenirs—a ceramic cup and a silk scarf bearing the likenesses of the Royal pair.

Doublier filmed from a platform over the crowd. The pressure of the crowd crushed his platform and he made his way for a hundred feet walking on the heads of dead and dying people. He was seized as he left the scene by the police, who peremptorily destroyed his film. He barely saved his camera.

In 1895 there took place in Paris what was undeniably the first theatrical showing of motion pictures. So much acrimony has grown up over who actually showed the first "movies", to a paying audience, that I must apologise specifically for not having the date at hand. However, Edison's première at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York in 1896, which is officially recognised by the Hays Office and Macy's Department Store, as the natal date, came months after the Paris exhibition. From Lumière's to that first cinema audience, which included Maxim Gorki, came the first documentaries. Gorki was profoundly disturbed by the experience. He saw a woman of the Lumière household in a handsome striped silk dress, playing with her baby. He saw the famous "Workmen Razing a Wall", the first proletarian subject, and he saw another sequence of the Lumière employees leaving the factory. The shirt-waisted girls are stepping smartly out of the gate. "Look sharp, now," says Doublier, when he shows it to you, "Here I come." The young Francis comes out on a bicycle, scattering the girls and looking very jaunty in a straw boater.

Further Doublier sales tours took him to the Orient, to Madagascar, and back through North Africa. Early in the twentieth century he was sent to America to found a New England factory for Lumière Frères. The pressure of Eastman and to some extent, Edison, aborted the plan. Doublier became a producer. The movies had advanced in ten years from an advertising device to a theatrico-industrial undertaking. Doublier designed and built the first studios at Fort Lee, New Jersey, which were an advance over Edison's Black Maria, the box on the turn-table that followed the sun. Doublier's studios were designed

for artificially lighted sets, which George Méliès had been using.

Doublier produced comedies and serials and became quite rich and Americanised. He lived in an enormous frame house in Fort Lee with a staggering wine cellar, a charming wife and a growing family of boys, one of whom grew up to become a saxophone player. He allowed himself the gesture of retiring at 45.

In 1929 Doublier ceased being rich. He was able to keep the house; that was all. He went back to work at the age of 51 as a laboratory worker—where he had started at 16. He is a very good colour processor and still is at the age of 65.

Doublier has kept up the liveliest interest in films. His own precious French material he has augmented through swapping with other old timers for Edison, Méliès, and early English and American film.

One of the awesome bits in his archives is a few feet of the first sound film, patented in England in 1905 by Eugene Lauste, a French inventor. Lauste held the basic patent for sound-on-film by the variable density sound track, which, despite the absence of electrical amplification, he successfully demonstrated in 1907-9.

Doublier's historical collection is embodied in a fascinating film he has been making and re-making for twenty years. To my knowledge the only people who have seen Doublier's astonishing film are a few friends of Merritt Crawford, and the Boy Scouts and Chamber of Commerce of Fort Lee, New Jersey. Doublier has a high local reputation as an entertainer at neighbourhood festivities with his picture. He titles, dubs, processes, edits, and exhibits his own picture, and he is never satisfied with it. After a screening for an old crony like Merritt Crawford, a neglected American film historian, in which the two friends will dispute hotly over the remains of the wine cellar, Doublier is likely to spend his evenings for the next two weeks, re-editing the film.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SUMMER ISSUE

FILMS IN SWEDEN  
A PLEA for D. W. GRIFFITH  
CHILDREN'S CINEMA  
EIRE

6d.

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# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Subject for Discussion.** Seven League Productions. *Direction:* Hans Nieter. *Camera:* W. Suschitzky. *Associate Producer:* Basil Wright. M.O.I. 15 mins.

*Subject:* Venereal disease.

*Treatment:* A child loses its sight because his parents are unknowing syphilitics. The doctor attending the case goes to an A.R.P. post and is told that he is to lead the next discussion group at the post. When asked what subject he would choose he suggests that they should discuss venereal disease. The post warden, representing, probably accurately, the feelings of most middle-aged men, says that as they have men and women at their meetings the subject is unsuitable, unsavoury and unnecessary. A girl comes in and says that such an attitude is ridiculous and appeals to the other people for support. The doctor tells them about the child and also certain important points about V.D. and its treatment. His talk is reasonable and eminently sensible and the film ends with the post warden pinning up a notice saying that next week's "Subject for Discussion" will be Venereal Disease.

Faced with a subject about which everybody has probably some sort of mental inhibition, the producers have turned out a first-class job. The film avoids the sensational and the coy and is sane, sensible and interesting. The important medical points, symptoms, treatment and consequences are made clearly and could give offence only to the most prurient minded. It also carefully avoids the ethical question, so stupidly

plugged in the Government press advertisements. An excellent job.

*Propaganda Value:* The fact that audiences are going to be shown that, when necessary, syphilis and gonorrhoea can be discussed between people as casually as meningitis or small pox, is the main propaganda value of the film. But its more concrete statements should also have an excellent effect by placing venereal disease among the ailments which one automatically goes to the doctor about.

**China.** Paul Rotha Productions. *Production:* Donald Alexander. *Compiled by* Budge Cooper. M.O.I. 15 mins.

*Subject:* The rebirth of China.

*Treatment:* For the most part this film covers familiar ground, but it does it in such a way that one might be seeing it all for the first time. It tells of China relying on her past and torn by internal struggles. It shows Japan apeing the West, building up her industries and her war machine and finally seizing Manchuria in order to get vital raw materials. Then, alarmed at the signs of national unity growing up in China, she struck with her highly trained, highly mechanised army at what she thought would be an easy victim. The rest of the story we know. The material to illustrate the theme is extremely well chosen and the commentary is sensibly incisive. The film was only marred by an occasional indecisiveness in the effects track which sometimes

followed the visuals closely but gave up every now and then for no good reason.

*Propaganda value:* Excellent. One of the best straight informational films we have seen.

**Operational Heights.** R.A.F. Film Unit. M.O.I. 32 mins.

*Subject:* Barrage balloons guard vital stretches of the sea approaches to these islands. This is the story of the crew of one of the balloon ships and the work they do.

*Treatment:* A marriage has been arranged between the Montagus and Capulets. Documentary Romeo has made successful eyes at story-film Juliet, but what with one thing and another the consummation of the wedding looks like being a little more difficult than everybody thought. If the studios make a film about a man who mixes cocktails instead of a man who drinks them they call it documentary. If documentary gives a few gags and a bit of love interest to an engine driver they too often think that they are automatically going to enthrall an eager public. But the public on the whole likes its entertainment straight. It either wants fact or fiction and if fact is going to adopt the trappings of fiction for the better seduction of the audience it has got to learn its job all over again. People go to the movies to see stars but they stay there because of the careful, cunning, clever and hard slaving that goes into the film behind the stars. In a feature film the throw-away lines, the human touches, the ease and naturalness are the result of infinite experience and endless care. And the easier it looks on the screen the more difficult it is to do in the studio.

Thus we have *Operational Heights*. It is a nice film. It's got a good feeling about it, the men are well chosen, the job they do is pleasantly portrayed, the camerawork is superb, the editing excellent. Yet all the time the film wobbles between telling us what the job means and trying to interest us in the crew as individuals in a purely artificial way. There are little incidents scattered through the film, talk of a girl friend, the baking of a cake, those little touches which can mean so much. But to ask ordinary, pleasant men on a balloon ship to handle the necessary dialogue, to point the laughs—in fact to do anything other than their job—is surely to throw too much weight on their shoulders. This is not to suggest that ordinary people cannot handle an odd line or two in front of the camera, but the interplay of dialogue, building up incident and sequence, is a job for professionals.

Apart from this basic weakness the film is pleasant enough.

*Propaganda Value:* Good informational stuff.

**Worker and Warfront No. 5.** M.O.I. Non-T. 5 mins.

*Subject:* A magazine of various items relating to the war effort.

*Treatment:* This issue is a very great advance on all the previous ones. The subject matter has something more urgent to it and the treatment has plenty of bite as a result. The two highspots are the speed up of coal production via Joint Committees, etc., and an admirable item, edited from North African material, of an aerial sortie from a palm-fringed aerodrome.

*Propaganda value:* Good. It is to be hoped that the series will keep up to this level.

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders—and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Cinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kinematograph WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2



# CATALOGUE OF FILMS, MADE AND ACQUIRED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, FROM JULY 1st TILL DECEMBER 31st, 1942.

Published by permission of the Ministry of Information.

## NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

"Alert in the East", "Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat" and "Welfare of the Workers", listed in the catalogue published in D.N.L., October, 1942, have been withdrawn.

Film titles in brackets are alternative titles of films listed elsewhere in the catalogue.

Names of producers and directors in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

Lengths are recorded in feet of 35 mm. gauge, or in minutes of 16 mm. gauge.

5-M: Five-minute film.

T: Mainly for theatrical release.

N.T.: Mainly for non-theatrical release.

I: Instructional. N.T.

C.F.L.: Listed in Central Film Library.

W: Withdrawn.

R: Reviewed in D.N.L.

O: Sent overseas.

OO: Mainly for overseas use.

OOO: Wholly for overseas use.

## 1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES		LENGTH	NOTES
					T	NT		
Ask C.A.B.	CFL 5-M O	Verity..	S. Box M. Munden }	H. Cass	9/42	1/43	803	
Battle for Freedom, The	CFL NT O	Strand	B. Wright	—	—	9/42	1,342	Library compilation
Battle for Supplies, The	CFL OO	Strand	B. Wright	—	—	11/42	1,658	Library compilation. R. Vol. III, p. 156
C.E.M.A.	CFL NT O	Strand	A. Shaw	C. de Latour, J. Banting & others	—	11/42	1,567	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Cine Sports Magazine No. 1	OOO	G.B.I.	—	—	—	—	939	Despatched 11/42
Cine Sports Magazine No. 2	OOO	G.B.I.	—	—	—	—	930	Despatched 12/42
Civil Defence Ambulance	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Searle	—	1/43	1,863	
Clamping Potatoes	CFL I O	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	(Margaret Thompson)	—	11/42	693	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Coastal Command	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Holmes	11/42	—	6,593	Home T. distribution by Paramount. R. Vol. III, p. 152
Common Cause	CFL NT	Verity	Max Munden D. de Marney }	H. Cass	—	1/43	1,007	
Control Room	CFL NT O	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Bell	—	1/43	2,076	R. Vol. III, p. 156
Day That Saved the World, The	5-M O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	—	8/42	—	846	Library compilation
Dockers	5-M O	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	7/42	—	670	R. Vol. III, p. 100
Dustbin Parade	CFL 5-M O	Realist/Halas	(J. Taylor)	—	10/42	2/43	493	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey (Cartoon)
Empress Stadium	OOO	Paramount	—	—	—	—	1,250	Ed. by Spectator for U.S.S.R. only. Despd. 10/42
Essential Jobs	CFL 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prods.	D. Alexander	J. Page	8/42	12/42	550	R. Vol. III, p. 113
Feeding Your Hens in Wartime	CFL I O	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	1/43	978	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
First Aid Post	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Searle	—	1/43	1,232	
Free Home	5-M W	Verity	S. Box M. Munden }	H. Cass	8/42	—	633	
Freedom of Aberfeldy	OO	A. Harper	—	A. Harper	—	—	925	Despatched 2/43
Garden Tools	CFL I	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Margaret Thompson	—	1/43	1,209	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Great Harvest, The	CFL 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	J. Chambers	11/42	2/43	650	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
H.M.S. King George V	CFL NT O	Verity	—	(Rayd. Elton)	—	10/42	1,392	R. Vol. III, p. 125
House in London, A	CFL OO	Paramount	—	—	—	1/43	781	Despatched 8/42. R. Vol. III, p. 125
Indians in Action	OOO	Celluloid Despatch	—	—	—	—	861	Newsreel compilation. Despatched 9/42
Killed or be Killed	CFL NT O	Realist	(J. Taylor)	Len Lye	—	1/43	1,644	R. Vol. IV, p. 165
Letter from Ulster, A	T O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	B. Hurst	2/43	—	2,910	Made with co-operation of U.S. Forces in Britain. Home T. distribution by M.G.M.
Life Begins Again	CFL NT O	Paul Rotha Prods.	(P. Rotha)	D. Alexander	—	10/42	1,799	
Lift Your Head Comrade	CFL O	Spectator	B. Wright	M. Hankinson	12/42	3/43	1,316	"Into Battle, No. 1." R. Vol. IV, p. 165
Malta Convoy	CFL OO	Movietone	—	—	—	1/43	1,180	Newsreel compilation
Malta G.C.	T O	Crown & Army Film Unit	—	—	1/43	—	1,821	Compilation. Home T. distribution by Warners. Music by Sir Arnold Bax. Commentary spoken by Laurence Olivier. R. Vol. IV, p. 170
Model Procedure for Water	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	Kay Mander	—	10/42	2,039	
Relaying	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	Kay Mander	—	10/42	2,030	R. Vol. III, p. 125
National Fire Service Mobilising	OOO	Pathe	—	—	—	—	894	Despatched 8/42
Newfoundlanders at War	CFL 5-M O	Shell	E. Anstey	N. Bell	9/42	11/42	684	R. Vol. III, p. 125
New Fire Bomb, A	CFL 5-M O	Gainsborough	(E. Black)	V. Guest	9/42	1/43	725	R. Vol. III, p. 152
None Has It, The	—	Gaumont British	(E. Black)	J. Harlow	—	1/43	3,844	Recruiting film. N.F. distribution
One Company	OO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	—	975	Despatched 1/43
Order of Lenin	OOO	Ealing	M. Bacon	T. Dickinson	—	—	1,916	Adaptation of last 2 reels of Next of Kin. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 12/42
Raid on France	OOO	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	—	—	3,242	Newsreel compln. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 9/42
Report from Britain	OOO	Strand	A. Shaw	I. Moffat	—	—	1,162	Edited by Spectator. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 9/42
Russian Lesson	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	939	Newsreel compilation. Despatched 11/42
Greetings to Soviet Schoolchild	OOO	Spectator	—	—	—	—	926	Newsreel compilation.
Shock Troops	CFL NT O	Movietone	—	—	—	1/43	1,708	R. Vol. III, p. 151
Sky Giant	CFL NT O	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Tharpe	—	1/43	1,338	Assoc. Prodr.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. III, p. 151
Speed up on Stirlings	CFL NT O	Verity	—	R. Keene	—	1/43	1,084	R. Vol. III, p. 113
Spring on the Farm	CFL NT O	Merton Park	(I. Dalrymple)	C. Musk	—	9/42	954	Technicolor. Despatched 8/42. R. Vol. III, p. 113
Twelve Days	OOO	Crown	—	—	—	—	1,051	Adapted from a British Council film of the same name. R. Vol. III, p. 152
United Nations, The	CFL NT	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	1/43	2,409	Home T. Distributed by Pathe. R. Vol. III, p. 151
We Sail at Midnight	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Spiro	2/43	—	980	Assoc. Producer: A. Shaw. Despatched 9/42.
We Speak to India	OOO	Pub. Rel.	—	R. Massingham	—	—	943	R. Vol. III, p. 130
Women away from Home	CFL NT O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	G. Gunn	—	9/42	880	Items produced by various units. Edited by Paul
Worker and Warfront No. 2	CFL NT O	—	—	—	—	7/42	1,000	Rotha Productions. R. Vol. III, p. 125 (No. 2);
Worker and Warfront No. 3	CFL NT O	—	—	—	—	11/42	998	Vol. IV, p. 165 (3); Vol. IV, p. 166 (4)
Worker and Warfront No. 4	CFL NT O	—	—	—	—	1/43	1,282	Assoc. Prodr.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. III, p. 152
Young Farmers	CFL NT O	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	1/43	1,282	



## 2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

(Average Length 125ft.)

TITLE OR THEME	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOV. DEPT. CONCERNED	RELEASE DATE
Diphtheria	Paul Rotha Productions	(J. Chambers)	Health	13/7/42
Child Road Safety	Spectator	(J. Ellitt)	War Transport	27/7/42
Sorting Salvage	Spectator	(J. Ellitt)	Supply	10/8/42
Correct Addressing	Pathe	(L. Behr)	G.P.O.	13/8/42
Diphtheria II	Paul Rotha Productions	(J. Chambers)	Health	17/8/42
Collapse Metal Tubes	Realist	(L. Lye)	Supply	27/8/42
Water Saving	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Health	3/9/42
N.A.A.F.I.	Paul Rotha Productions	(S. Eisler)	Labour	14/9/42
Care of Clothes	Paul Rotha Productions	(P. Pickering)	Board of Trade	21/9/42
Kitchen Waste for Pigs (Cartoon)	McDougal & McKendrick	(McDougal & McKendrick)	Food	8/10/42
Be Prepared	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	War Transport	22/10/42
Railings†	Publicity Pictures	(A. Hopkins)	Works and Buildings	10/10/42
Chicken Feed	Spectator	(B. Luff)	Supply	5/11/42
Service Women	Publicity Pictures	(A. Hopkins)	M.O.I.	16/11/42
The Five Inch Bath	Public Relationship	(R. Massingham)	Fuel and Power	19/11/42
The Postman Always Rings at Christmas	Nettlefolds	(G. Shurley)	G.P.O.	22/11/42
The Magician	Paul Rotha Productions	(B. Cooper)	Fuel and Power	3/12/42
Sensible Buying	Paul Rotha Productions	(P. Hennessey)	Board of Trade	7/12/42
Water Pipes	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Health	10/12/42
Eyes on the Target	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Fuel and Power	14/12/42
The Way to his Heart (with The Aspidochelone)	Strand	(D. Taylor)	Food	17/12/42
Cooks	Verity	(K. Annakin)	M.O.I.	21/12/42
Little Annie's Rag-Book (Puppet film)	Paul Rotha Productions	(L. Bradshaw)	Supply	24/12/42
Is Your Journey Really Necessary?	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	War Transport	30/12/42
Hogsmorton (with Gillie Potter)	Strand	(D. Taylor)	Fuel and Power	31/12/42

† Non-T distribution only.

## 3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS
Feeding the Army (Silent)	770	8/42
R.A.F. Rescue Boats (Silent)	650	9/42
These are Mobile Canteens (Silent)	702	9/42
Return of the Emperor (Silent)	825	12/42
Take Cover (Silent)	2,805	12/42

## 4. ACQUIRED FILMS

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	SOURCE	PRODUCT'N UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES	T	NT	LENGTH	NOTES
<b>ARMY FILM UNIT</b>										
(Front Line Camera)		See "Twenty-One Miles"								
Street Fighting	CFL O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	(H. Stewart)	—	8/42	1,205		R. Vol. III, p. 151
Tank Battle	T O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	12/42	—	1,524		Home T. distribution by Anglo-American
Troopship	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	7/42	11/42	686		R. Vol. IV, p. 166
Twenty One Miles	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	(H. Watt)	8/42	—	720		R. Vol. III, p. 100
										A longer version (1,025 ft.) for distribution overseas. R. Vol. III, p. 113, under the title: "Front Line Camera"
Via Persia	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	10/42	1/43	742		Compilation
CANADA										
Motor Cycle Training	5-M O	Canadian Army	C.A.F.U.	—	(J. McDougal)	10/42	2/43	693		Produced in Britain. R. Vol. III, p. 151
Battle for Oil	C.F.L.	Nat. Film Board	N.F.B.	—	—	—	9/42	1,663		
Strategy of Metals	C.F.L.	Nat. Film Board	N.F.B.	—	—	—	1/43	1,800		
<b>BRITISH COUNCIL</b>										
Fishermen of England	OOO	British Council	Spectator	(I. Scott)	I. Scott	—	—	864		Re-edited for U.S.S.R. by Spectator. Despatched 9/42
Good Value	OOO	British Council	Realist	—	H. Nieter	—	—	768		Re-edited for U.S.S.R. by Spectator. Despatched 9/42
<b>I.C.I.</b>										
Growing Good Potatoes	CFL	Plant Protection	Strand	D. Taylor	R. Bond	—	1/43	900		
Harvest Shall Come, The	CFL	I.C.I.	Realist	B. Wright	M. Anderson	—	8/42	3,116		
<b>INDIA</b>										
Chiang Kai Shek in India	5-M O	Films Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	—	—	9/42	—	712		Original title "Our Gallant Neighbour". Recommended. R. Vol. III, p. 125
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>										
According to Plan	CFL O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	—	10/42	8 min.		
Children's Story	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Strand	S. Legg	A. Shaw	—	1/43	1,300		
Empire Aid	5-M O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	8/42	—	395		
Face of Scotland	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Realist	—	B. Wright	—	1/43	1,300		
Proof Positive	CFL O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	—	10/42	7 min.		
They Made the Land	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	—	1/43	1,900		
This is Our Heritage	CFL	Gire G.	Tannar British	R. Calvert	—	—	1/43	17 min.		
Wealth of a Nation	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Scottish Films	S. Legg	D. Alexander	—	1/43	1,370		
<b>POLAND</b>										
Poland's New Front	CFL	Polish Govern.	Polish F.U.	—	—	—	10/42	642		Compilation by E. Cekalski
R.A.F.										
In the Drink	CFL	Air Ministry	Nettlefolds	(E. Roy)	(H. Hughes)	—	5/43	1,424		Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins
Operational Height	T	R.A.F.F.U.	R.A.F. F.U.	—	—	3/43	—	2,857		Home T. distribution by Butchers
U.S.A.										
America Moves her Japs	5-M O W	U.S. Govern't	Office of War Information	—	—	10/42	—	797		American title: "Japanese Relocation." With Milton S. Eisenhower
Henry Browne Farmer	CFL	U.S. Govern't	Dept. of Agric.	—	R. Barlow	—	1/43	1,000		
Home on the Range	CFL	U.S. Govern't	Dept. of Agric.	—	T. Hogan	—	1/43	1,000		
On the Farm	CFL	Harmon Found.	Har. Foundn.	—	—	—	1/43	20 min.		Silent



## 5. ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I.

	FOOTAGE OF FILMS						NUMBER OF FILMS				
	Sept. 3- Dec. 31 1939	1940	1941	Jan. 1- June 30 1942	TOTAL		Sept. 3- Dec. 31, 1939	1940	1941	1942	TOTAL
5-Minute	—	13,791	25,113	20,141	59,045	5-Minute	—	20	37	29	86
15-Minute	—	—	—	1,316	1,316	15-Minute	—	—	—	1	1
General Theatrical Distribution	3,130	13,543	9,228	22,506	48,407	General Theatrical Distribution	2	12	5	7	26
General N.T. Distribution	—	23,545	7,890	41,457	72,892	General N.T. Distribution	—	23	7	35	65
Instructional and Training	—	4,109	10,280	30,322	44,911	Instructional and Training	—	6	12	24	42
Mainly Overseas	—	—	—	16,383	16,383	Mainly overseas	—	—	—	12	12
Wholly Overseas	—	3,100	11,093	22,944	37,137	Wholly Overseas	—	3	10	18	31
Trailers	—	1,600*	3,000*	4,250	8,850	Trailers	—	8	15	34	57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,130</b>	<b>59,688</b>	<b>66,604</b>	<b>159,519</b>	<b>288,941</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>320</b>
Colonial Film Unit } 35 mm.	—	11,919	7,836	11,287	31,042 }	Colonial Film Unit Productions	—	8	10	16*	34
Productions } 16 mm.	—	—	—	944	944 }	Acquired 5-Minute Films	—	2	10	17	29
Acquired 5-Minute Films	—	1,135	6,657	11,353	19,145						

\* Average length = 200 feet.

† Average length = 125 feet.

\* Includes four 16 mm. productions.

## 6. ANALYSIS OF FILMS ACQUIRED BY THE M.O.I.

SOURCE	1940*			1941			1942				TOTALS FOR 1940, 1941 and 1942				COMB. TOTAL
	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	T.	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	T.	O.O.O.	
Africa	2	—	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	4	1	—	1	6
A.F.U.	—	—	—	2	3	—	3	6	—	—	5	9	—	—	14
Australia and New Zealand	—	—	—	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	3	2	—	—	5
B.C.G.A.	6	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	7
British Council	1	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	2	5	—	—	3	8
Canbury	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	3
Canada	4	—	1	2	—	1	5	2†	—	—	11	2	—	2	15
Can. Council for Health Education	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
I.C.I.	—	—	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	4
India	—	—	—	6	1	—	—	2	—	1	6	3	—	1	10
London Fire Brigade	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6
Miscellaneous	4	—	1	14	1	2	12	1	—	—	30	2	—	3	35
National Savings	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	—	6	—	—	6
Poland	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	1	—	—	4	1	—	—	5
R.A.F.	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	2
Shell	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	4
U.S.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	1	—	—	15	1	—	—	16
(March of Time)	2	—	—	3	—	—	2	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	7
U.S.S.R.	—	—	—	5	1	—	4	1	—	—	9	2	—	—	11
TOTAL	22	2	3	47	10	4	57	17	1	3	126	29	1	10	166

\* No films were acquired in 1939.

† Produced in Britain by Canadian Army Film Unit.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH (Cont.)

obtained free of charge and many are available in the 16 mm. size. The total number of films listed is 117.

## Trailers

AS SOON as stock rationing began to be discussed, it occurred to many people that one obvious and easy way of saving celluloid would be to abolish the screen trailer, that advertising snippet which extols in hysterical language and feverish pictures the merits of next week's film. There was one body, however, which although perhaps finding the method obvious, found it far from easy. National Screen Service makes trailers for all 28 film producing companies operating in this country and distributes between 5,500 and 6,000 trailers each week to nearly 4,000 cinemas. National Screen Service appears to feel considerable anxiety in the matter of stock saving and communicated the foregoing statistics to Mr. Paul Trench, film critic of the *Evening Standard*, together with much other information apparently designed to prove that trailer making was an important national industry with which we would dispense at our peril. After pointing out that it has been suggested that a single slide could be substituted for the trailer, Mr. Trench says: "The issue, however, is not quite so simple as that. National Screen Service, the firm which makes feature film trailers, is also producing and distributing Government-sponsored trailers. It is employed by the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Food, National Savings Committee, Red Cross, and so on. If National Screen Service ceased to issue trailers, the Government would lose a valued source of propaganda. That is one argument for retaining trailers."

The reason why the production of feature film trailers must remain inseparable from such Government work as is undertaken by National Screen Service is not made clear, but we are left to assume that the reason is a good one and Mr. Trench continues:—"The Managing Director of National Screen Service is Mr. Paul Kimberley. Mr. Kimberley is also Director of Army Kinematography, which means that he is in charge of production of all Army training films. Mr. Kimberley may find himself forced to use less celluloid for Service films, although his private film business may not be affected."

Further light is thrown on the situation by the following extract from the *Kinematograph Weekly's* report of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association's recent General Council meeting:

F. A. Prior drew attention to the proposed cutting out of advertisement films. He realised that in war time all went by the board, but he was concerned at dismissing without consideration the suggestion that trailers should be discontinued altogether. It was an easy thing to say that they could be done without, but it should not be forgotten that if this were done someone would have to go right out of business. As an important industry the trade should make a large sacrifice as a contribution to keep in business those who had the Trade's support before the war.

The General Secretary pointed out that economies in the direction of advertisement films and trailers would be far too insignificant to take into account and there was no intention of cutting these out.



## New Documentary Films cont.

**These Are the Men.. Into Battle No. 4.** Strand. Production: Donald Taylor. Devised and compiled by Alan Osbiston and Dylan Thomas. Commentators: J. McKechnie and Brian Herbert. M.O.I. 12 mins.

**Subject:** *These Are the Men* takes an abbreviated version of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and superimposes upon the Nuremberg speeches of the Nazi leaders a set of orations in English in which Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, Streicher and Hess report their sins and mistakes as frankly as if they were victims of one of those notorious "confession drugs".

**Treatment:** The commentary and speeches are in verse by Dylan Thomas (published in the last issue of *D.N.L.*) The film opens with scenes of ordinary decent men going about their day-to-day work. These are "the makers, the workers, the bakers". In a superimposition sequence we see these peaceful men plunged into the horrors of war. A voice cries out to know who was responsible for this crime.

The scene changes to the long Nuremberg vista of brown-shirts and banners. Three tiny figures approach the rostrum. The shot is held so that the suspense becomes almost intolerable. Then they move up to the microphones and Hitler begins the speeches. "We are the men," he shouts.

He describes his early frustrated life, his hatred of Jews and socialists, his belief in the power of blood. The other leaders follow, each to profess his sadistic faith. The speeches are punctuated by the regimented cries of the crowd and rhythmical screams of "Sieg Heil!" The mass shouting and the picture is untouched and remains exactly as it was in the original film; only the superimposed English voices have been brought up to date and now carry the fully matured horror of the pre-war Nazi festival. Now we know for certain where it was all leading.

At the end of the film, the narrator says that many of the eager young Germans whom we see worshipping their Führer may in time be purged and cured and become capable of serving mankind. But their leaders, the narrator shouts, "Can never, never be forgiven."

Alan Osbiston's editing is brilliant. He has used suspense in a masterly way and has brought in the animal Nazi war cries at just those moments when they will give a sharp point of horror, irony, even of bitter comedy to the whole fantastic pageant. Dylan Thomas's verse frequently cuts like a knife into the pompously bestial affectations of this race of supermen. The verse which accompanies the ordinary peaceful citizens of the world is, however, less effective, perhaps because the poet has too often found himself obliged to fall back upon an over-conventional democratic line. His democrats are over-passive in spirit to the point of becoming puny in moral stature.

**Propaganda value:** Excellent. Less sophisticated audiences will, however, need to have their wits about them. They have to cope simultaneously with sensational pictures, English voices speaking verse, and faint German voices emanating from speakers whose neuroticisms frequently distract all attention from the sound. Yet audiences will make the effort and find it repaid. In its insistence on the essential anti-semitic and anti-socialist character of German leadership, the film strikes a blow for clear thinking about the true nature of

(continued on page 196)



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.



### These Are the Men (cont.)

the war—and strikes a blow, therefore, for clear thinking about what must be the nature of our war aims, if the sacrifice of blood is to be worth while. The high level of intense feeling is maintained until almost the very end, but the last few feet fall a little flat. The shouting voice affirming that the Nazi leaders can never be forgiven (shouting with a suspicion of hysteria rather than with confident determination) fails to strike the right finishing note. Most ordinary people have no intention of forgiving Hitler, Goebbels, Göring, Streicher or Hess, and they will be somewhat bewildered to find the Government regarding it as a matter worth announcing so excitedly.

### Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR,

Dear Sir,

I see in the Documentary News Letter of November/December, 1942, there is an article entitled "U.S. Dollar Winning Battle to Control British Film Industry", in which it is mentioned that Ealing Studios are "already hitched to the Americans".

I am asked to tell you that your contributor is completely misinformed in this particular; this Company is absolutely independent and has never used any funds for production other than their own resources. In this instance, and perhaps in this rare instance, it may be said that the Americans concerned have been our servants and not we theirs. The United Artists franchise agreement is such that United Artists is employed by the producers for the purpose of international distribution and United Artists never, under any circumstances, participate in production finance. In any case our arrangements with them are ending and we are reverting to the use of a Company which we own and control, for the distribution of our films.

As we take a pride in our independent position at Ealing, I would be thankful if you would publish this correction.

Yours faithfully,

CAVALCANTI

P.S.—Whilst on the subject of accuracy, may I make another point on behalf of Michael Balcon? You have named him as the producer of a food short made in these studios. Mr. Balcon did not produce this film, but loaned Studio space here for it to be produced, after protesting in vain that it should not be made.

### A REPLY

We are glad to hear from Cavalcanti that Ealing Studios are not tied to the American financiers. For some years past, as they must admit, all their films have been released through United Artists, a wholly American company. Knowing the control that distributors normally exercise over producers, it was only fair to assume, at the date of writing, that the films being made at Ealing Studios were at the dictation of United Artists. However, we are happy to learn that Ealing Studios in common with the only other independent producers in this country, have once more returned to their own distribution agency.

EDITORIAL BOARD

No. 11

## THE ASS AND THE LAP-DOG



There was an Ass and a Lap-dog that belonged to the same master. The Ass was tied up in the stable, and had plenty of corn and hay to eat, and was as well off as an Ass could be. The little dog was always sporting and gambolling about, caressing and fawning upon his master in a thousand amusing ways, so that he became a great favourite, and was permitted to lie in his master's lap. The Ass, indeed, had enough to do; he was drawing wood all day, and had to take his turn at the mill at night. But while he grieved over his own lot, it galled him more to see the Lap-dog living in such ease and luxury; so thinking that if he acted a like part to his master, he should fare the same, he broke one day from his halter, and rushing into the hall began to kick and prance about in the strangest fashion; then swishing his tail and mimicking the frolics of the favourite, he upset the table where his master was at dinner, breaking it in two and smashing all the crockery; nor would he leave off till he jumped upon his master, and pawed him with his rough-shod feet. The servants, seeing their master in no little danger, thought it was now high time to interfere, and having released him from the Ass's caresses, they so belaboured the silly creature with sticks and staves, that he never got up again; and breathed his last.

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958